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A study on spontaneity: Some notes on the divinatory handbook

P.Ryl. 28.

Abstract: *P.Ryl. 28* is a miniature codex detailing forty-seven prognostications based on palmomancy, or divination by spontaneous bodily twitches. In this paper, I provide the first full English translation of this document, along with a transcription. I argue that the piece was a 'spontaneous creation', by which I mean that it was produced without regard for other potential texts in the tradition as well as without regard for how it read as a complete text. This is followed by a consideration of what a text such as this means in the development of divinatory texts and traditions.

In the John Rylands Library Deansgate, Manchester, sits a small, unassuming book: sixteen pages, each only 7.5 cm by 6.6 cm, describe in handwritten ancient Greek the meanings attributed to the spontaneous twitching of various body parts – an instance of a practice known as palmomancy. The document may be dated to the late third or early fourth century CE on palaeographical grounds.

In the ancient Mediterranean, divination – the seeking of messages from super-human agent(s), as well as warnings on the future in seemingly random occurrences – was a common and diverse practice.¹ People sought signs in a wide and diverse range of media, from dreams to cheese.² Palmomancy is a little known and rarely discussed tradition within this field.³

The text in question, a codex catalogued as *P.Ryl. 28* and first published in 1911,⁴ is a list of forty-seven parts of the human body, ranging from the abdomen to the toes, along with the meanings attributed to spontaneous twitching that occurs in each part. The sentences appear to be very formulaic, as open conditional statements that have the body part in the protasis and the meaning as the apodosis. In its

¹ Definition(s) of divination too are as common as they are diverse: Rüpke 2013. For the conception of human communication with super-human agents as an aspect of Lived Ancient Religion, cf. e.g. Raja and Rüpke 2015, esp. 12-13.

² Cf. Artem. 2.69.

³ Contemporary research on body divination more generally, within the wider discipline of physiognomy, is slowly garnering interest: cf. Dasen and Wilgaux 2013; Dasen 2015.

⁴ Hunt 1911.

original publication, it was given a transcription and a partial translation into English by the editor, Arthur S. Hunt, along with a basic linguistic commentary, which largely consisted in comparing it to two other known palmomantic texts: '*P.Vit.*' (now re-catalogued as *P.Flor.* 391) and 'Version A'.⁵ Hunt's edition of the text provided no breathings or accents, but inserted word breaks.

This codex was then largely ignored for almost a century, until S. Costanza published a collection of all known Greek palmomantic texts, from antiquity to the medieval period.⁶ Costanza provided a reprint of Hunt's text, albeit with breathings, accents and a papyrological format in line with the Leiden conventions,⁷ along with a full Italian translation. Whilst this includes a comprehensive introduction to the practice of palmomancy in the ancient world, there is little more than a page of observations directed at *P.Ryl.* 28 in particular.

In this article I provide a translation of the document, along with my own transcription in the appendix, before putting forward the argument that *P.Ryl.* 28 was a spontaneous creation, and discussing the implications this has for the study of divination and lived ancient religion.

I define the text as a 'spontaneous creation' in order to emphasise its distance from the rest of the tradition. Although we only have fragments of other palmomantic texts, I believe there is enough to demonstrate that *P.Ryl.* 28 was written without reference to other texts of this nature. My argument is that, rather than being a text that is copied or adapted, or one that directly engaged with other texts from the same tradition, this is a text that was created merely so that the owner could claim access to an 'authoritative' text. In this respect, it is a spontaneous creation both in the sense that it was produced without regard for other potential texts in the tradition as well as without regard for how it read as a complete text.⁸ In

⁵ A medieval manuscript, now republished under the same name in Costanza 2009.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ The agreed rules for formatting an edition of a papyrological text, in 1932. See Montevicchi 1973, 63-65, for a description and history of the Leiden Convention.

⁸ Cf. *OED* s.v. 'spontaneity' meanings 3a and 3b respectively.

the final section of this article, I discuss the type of ritual expert who would produce and own a text such as this.

1. Preliminary Notes

Due to the nature, content and publication history of the text, it is important to note some initial definitions.

In respect of *P.Ryl. 28*'s publishing history, the terms that may create the most confusion are 'recto' and 'verso'. Normal papyrological convention is that the former of these denotes the side where the fibres run horizontally and the latter where the fibres run vertically. But this terminology is blurred in codicological practice, where the words are simply used to describe the first and second sides of the page written on, respectively.⁹ In the assembling of *P.Ryl. 28*, four sheets of papyrus were laid on top of one another, folded and then bound, so that the first and last pages are the same side of the same sheet. Hunt, for his publication, named the pages in accordance with the papyrological convention, meaning that, in the second half of the codex, the verso side of the page comes before the recto. For my edition of the text, and for the purposes of this discussion, I have renamed the pages in accordance with codicological convention. For example, in the following discussion, Recto 7 is the thirteenth page to be written on, and precedes Verso 7.

A second caveat: in the study of papyrological texts, the question of authorship can lead to a blurring of terminology. The term 'author' is typically used to define the person who created the text, in regard to the words and the linguistic and stylistic devices that are employed. This may or may not, however, be the same person who put pen to page. A document such as *P.Ryl. 28* could have been the work of a scribe performing the physical task of writing for the creator, or potentially even a copyist recreating a new document based on an older text.¹⁰ There are a number of conjectures that have been drawn from the handwriting by both A. Hunt and S. Costanza, for example the date of the text; however, it remains unclear whether the

⁹ See Ruiz Garcia 1988, 40-1.

¹⁰ For the scribal class, see Houston 2009, 255.

creator and scribe are two separate people or one.¹¹ A. Hunt also notes that a second hand makes occasional corrections. These corrections are minimal, the insertion of one or two letters at a time, and so there is not enough to conclusively say whether these are in a different hand from the original text, added immediately after or much later. Their sparsity also suggests that these corrections were not actually meant to improve the text in any meaningful way. For the purpose of this article, therefore, I have simply used the term 'author' to describe the writer of the document in both senses, unless otherwise noted.

If this text is a spontaneous creation, as I hope to demonstrate below, it is unlikely to be the work of a copyist. Similarly, although it is impossible to draw evidence of ownership, the lack of self-derived authority in the text, discussed below, along with the nature of the document, suggests creation for one's own individual use rather than for sale.

The document's physical attributes are also somewhat distinct. As noted, the handbook is small, fitting in E. Turner's eleventh group of codices, classed as 'miniature'.¹² There is little to no margin around all four sides of the page, perhaps conforming to a functional rather than 'elegant' arrangement.¹³ W. Johnson argues that codices were not cheaper to produce than a papyrus scroll, due in part to the space lost from margins,¹⁴ but, in the case of *P.Ryl.* 28, the lack of margins and the document's size suggest that cost was, in fact, a factor that had a strong impact on the production of the text.

The codex form is seen as primarily (although not exclusively) a Christian book form for the first four centuries CE.¹⁵ *P.Ryl.* 28 is certainly not a Christian text, but as a reference book it certainly benefits from the codex form. As P. Stallybrass notes, 'the scroll as a technology depends upon a literal unwinding, in which the physical proximity of one moment in the narrative to another is both materially and

¹¹ For discussion of the palaeographic features, see Costanza 2009, 53-54.

¹² 1977, 14-22.

¹³ Hussein 1970, 52.

¹⁴ 2009, 267.

¹⁵ Roberts and Skeat 1985, 38; Bagnall 2009.

symbolically significant.¹⁶ The use of handbook like *P.Ryl.* 28, with linguistically distinct prognostications, depends more upon being searched and quoted rather than read start to finish.¹⁷ An amount of dissimilarity, then, would be expected between the prognostications: like the entries of a dictionary, different answers to each point are integral to the text. The level of inconsistency throughout the text, however, as discussed below, and the inconsistency of format in particular, is indicative of the spontaneous writing I envisage.

The size and form are suggestive of a use in transportation, which in turn supports the idea of an itinerant ritual expert.¹⁸ These were people who would travel from city to city, offering ritual, healing and divinatory services to local communities, often understood as selling their wares in the marketplace.¹⁹ In order to be successful at such a profession, one would have to display their 'power', and their knowledge quickly and succinctly to potential clients. As G. Stroumsa puts it: 'mastery of knowledge in general, and of the content of books in particular, is conceived of as an instrument of power – a power not only intellectual but also magical'.²⁰ In this respect, the possession of a palmomantic book, however it was created, was enough to create a tangible demonstration of its owner's knowledge and training, and therefore of its owner's presumed power, regardless of its actual origin.

A final preliminary note is on the translation itself. Translation is never an exact science, even between similar, contemporary languages. Exact meanings and phrases, which can never truly be expressed in the other language, must be pinned down, often at the expense of allusions and secondary meanings. This has been made particularly evident to me in a text that frequently defies its own conventions. For the purposes of this translation, and wider study, I have kept to a literal interpretation of the text as much as possible, at the expense of uncomfortable

¹⁶ 2002, 46.

¹⁷ For a Christian parallel, see Kruger 2005.

¹⁸ Frankfurter 2005; Flower 2008; Johnston 2008; Raphals 2013, 110.

¹⁹ Johnston 2008, 109-113

²⁰ 2009, 49.

grammatical errors that are also present in the original Greek.²¹ Unusual tense formation and missing conventions, seen throughout, can make for awkward reading, but I hope that my reason for translating the text in this literal way will be self-evident.

2. Translation

I have set out my translation here in order to develop, without distracting from, the argument of this article. A transcription of the Greek can be found in the appendix.

(Prognostication: lines)

(1: 1-3) If the abdomen twitches, it shows something good with negative conversation.

(2: 4-8) If the right part of the hips twitches, he shall be grieved for the present time, then cheered on account of himself or a friend.

(3: 9-13) If both parts of the hips twitch, the person so affected shall stand completely gripped in double trouble: pray to Nike.

(4: 14-17) If the right part of the lower back twitches, even a slave or pauper shall prosper greatly from toils.

(5: 18-22) If the left-hand part of the lower back twitches, he shall embark on many things and suffer loss until a certain time, and rise out of evils.

(6: 23-27) If the middle of the lower back twitches, bright gain to have been given to him by relatives, even to the slave and freedman.

(7: 28-30) If the pubis twitches, the person so affected shall be graceful; for the unmarried it shows marriage.

²¹ Costanza, by contrast, generally corrects the mistakes in his Italian translation, in order to convey a smooth interpretation of the text. Cf. Pr45, for which the original Greek misses most of the protasis, but Costanza translates as “se il dito seguente palpita...” (2009, 64).

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(8: 31-37) If the perineum twitches, the person so affected shall be exposed in having destroyed something secret; for the slave a change in slavery or place, as Berossus says: pray to Zeus.

(9: 38-40) If the *os sacrum* ('sacred bone') twitches, it shows the new gain of many great things to come.

(10: 41-45) If the private parts twitch, the person so affected casts off many things, shall be fed in old age, but he shall give up on making debts.

(11: 46-49) If the glans or prepuce twitches, it shows joy, for the woman it shows profit with flaw.

(12: 50-52) If the left-hand testicle twitches, it indicates something good after troubles.

(13: 52-57) If the testicle, the two of them twitch, they show good cheer to happen on account of a feminine face; for money-lenders, danger.

(14: 58-63) If the right buttock twitches, while for him who has a sedentary life, it shows business but inaction; on the other hand, for the traveller, the sign is without pain.

(15: 63-67) If the left-hand part of the buttocks twitches, it clearly shows he shall spend some business fruitlessly.

(16: 68-74) If the rump, called the anus (*'dactylios'*) by some, twitches, it shows exposure and verbal abuse, and the appearance of secret things.

(17: 75-80) If the right hip-socket twitches, the one called the backside (*'gloutos'*), it shows trouble and toil; for the person travelling abroad it shows good.

(18: 81-85) If the left-hand hip-socket twitches, it shows trouble and toil; but to the person in distress, cheer.

(19: 86-91) If the right thigh twitches, it shows new gain to come from a young face; the same for both women and slaves.

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(20: 92-96) If the left-hand thigh twitches, it shows joy and profit from a feminine face.

(21: 97-101) If the right knee twitches, the person so affected shall be cheered by a friendly face: pray to Tyche.

(22: 102-105) If the left-hand knee twitches, it shows migration and displeasure from females.

(23: 106-112) If the right lower leg twitches, it indicates that he becomes glorious; for women it shows loveliness: pray to Aphrodite and sacrifice.

(24: 113-117) If the left-hand lower leg twitches, it indicates for women blame from adultery; for slaves, menaces and miseries.

(25: 118-122) If both the lower legs twitch, it shows great deeds and foreign travel on account of a woman.

(26: 123-126) If the right shin twitches, it shows he shall be greatly prosperous: pray to Hermes.

(27: 127-134) If the left-hand shin twitches, it shows he shall throw off a submissive face; the slave in bondage shall be relieved of the bondage.

(28: 135-140) If the right tibia twitches, the person so affected shall be vexed on account of a friend, and shall be subjected to abuse: pray to Nemesis.

(29: 141-145) If the left tibia twitches, the person so affected shall make a great, unexpected journey, and be vexed throughout it.

(30: 146-148) If both the hamstrings twitch, it shows good: pray to Tyche.

(31: 149-155) If the right calf twitches, he shall acquire something unexpectedly in life and have stability for the present time; slaves and the pauper shall be prosperous.

(32: 156-159) If the left-hand calf twitches, he shall be vexed by a woman or a friend: pray to Tyche.

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(33: 160-163) If the right ankle twitches, it indicates an unexpected message to him.

(34: 164-167) If the left-hand ankle twitches, he shall be burdened in a judgement, and acquitted.

(35: 168-173) If the ankle-joint of the right foot twitches, it shows grief shall happen; for the traveller it will bring distress: pray to Nike.

(36: 174-177) If the ankle-joint of the left-hand foot twitches, it shows irregularity: pray to Nemesis.

(37: 178-179) Twitching heels show good.

(38: 180-184) If the right foot twitches, he shall be master of many great possessions; the slave will be free.

(39: 185-191) If the left foot twitches, it indicates that he shall be misled by words and trust, and delayed in making a journey: pray to Hermes.

(40: 192-197) If the little toe of the right foot twitches, it shows prosperity for him from a young face; pray to Tyche.

(41: 198-200) If the next smallest <toe> twitches, it shows the same thing: pray to Tyche.

(42: 201-206) If the third toe is twitching, it indicates he shall have nausea and combat because of a feminine face, then that he shall be cheered: pray to Dionysus.

(43: 207-212) If the big toe is twitching, it indicates that he who is a slave shall enjoy ownership, and be delivered from pains.

(44: 213-218) If the little toe of the left-hand foot twitches, it shows he has altruistic cares, then joy: pray to Zeus.

(45: 219-222) If <the third?>, he shall experience many cares and miseries: pray to Zeus.

(46: 220-227) If the fourth, he shall be master of much property and many people; the slave shall inherit himself.

(47: 228-230) If the fifth, he shall prosper similarly on account of a feminine face.

3. Spontaneity of the Text

The text of *P.Ryl.* 28, when read as a continuous piece, comes across as a haphazard medley of unsystematic conventions. Individually, most of the prognostications hold their own, and, as has been shown by both A. Hunt and S. Costanza, some similarities can be found with other palmomantic texts.²² Yet many of the elements, in conjunction with other prognostications *of the same document*, are jarring. This would not be evident in its use as a reference guide because, presumably, only the relevant prognostication would be read, if they were read aloud at all. In this respect, regard for other palmomantic texts or for itself as a complete text are not necessary, and thus its spontaneity, as defined above, is a possibility.

Perhaps the most striking element of the text is that it starts halfway down the body: it is typical of ancient texts on body divinations to run downwards, from head to heels.²³ *P.Ryl.* 28 does run in this same direction, though it is evidently missing one or even two previous volumes. Other palmomantic texts, although they are much more fragmentary, demonstrate readings from across the body.

Due to space constraints, I must limit myself to expanding upon four of these elements: grammatical inconsistencies, multiple apodoses, doubled body parts, and terminal invocations.

a. Grammatical inconsistencies

²² Cf. Costanza 2009 for the range of surviving Greek palmomantic texts, ranging from Late Antique Egypt to the medieval manuscript tradition.

²³ Cf. Dasen 2015, esp. 155.

For this sort of text, a level of repetitiveness is to be expected.²⁴ If a single prognostication is read, a number of elements certainly do sound as if they should be repetitive. To take Prognostication 1 (henceforth Pr1) as our initial example: ‘If the abdomen twitches, it shows something good with negative conversation’ (ὕπογαστριον ἐὰν ἄλληται, ἀγαθὸν τι δηλοῖ μετ’ ἁλλοίου λόγου). A relatively simple open conditional sentence, sketching a sufficiently vague outcome that the modern reader might expect from a newspaper horoscope or equivalent. The protasis is indeed formulaic and, with three exceptions (Pr14, Pr37 and Pr42, excluding pluralisation and spelling errors), each following protasis is ‘If the [body part] twitches...’ ([body part] ἐὰν ἄλληται). When we get to the apodoses, however, consistency fades into the background. The most common construction uses, as Pr1 does, the third person present indicative verb of showing (such as δηλοῖ), which appears in twenty-eight prognostications. Yet this is barely more than half the text – not enough to claim consistency. Otherwise, eleven apodoses use a passive construction to describe the fate of the questioner, four of which specifically designating them as ‘the person so affected’ (ὁ τοιοῦτος); this construction is not found in the rest of the papyrological tradition, and only appears three times out of the 190 prognostications of the medieval Version A. In a further ten instances active constructions are used, three of which specifically using ὁ τοιοῦτος as the subject of the construction. There are three apodoses that do not use any of the above constructions. The second apodosis of Pr35, for example, features the verb οἶσει (‘it will bring’), which is unattested in the rest of the document or any other extant palmomantic text.

In Imperial Eastern traditions of luck and fate, the left side, and things associated with the left were usually, though not exclusively, considered inauspicious and unlucky.²⁵ Within *P.Ryl.* 28, twitches of left-hand body parts do not necessarily

²⁴ Cf. e.g. Harris-McCoy’s comment on Artemidorus’ repetitive language: ‘after just a few chapters, the reader will have read the same words and phrases many times, he will therefore be able to grasp the contents of the *Oneirocritica* more readily. Indeed, varied vocabulary and syntax are anathema in texts whose main goal is efficient transmission of information (2012, 10).

²⁵ Cf. Cic. *Div.* 2.82; Plut. *Quaes. Rom.* 78, both of whom imply that Rome (and the West) sees the left as auspicious *as opposed to* Greece (and the East). Cf. also this concept with ornithomancy, as

correspond to a negative outcome, and indeed positives can be seen (for example, Pr20). By contrast, the wider palmomantic tradition records almost exclusively negative apodoses, or, at best, indifferent responses for the left-hand side.²⁶ Further, the left-hand body parts, in *P.Ryl.* 28 at least, are designated as εὐώνυμος, an uncommon, though not rare, euphemism for ‘left’, in all but two instances: Pr29 and Pr39. Both of these instead use the more common ἀριστερός. In my translation, I have used ‘left-hand’ for εὐώνυμος and ‘left’ for ἀριστερός, to get across the similar but inconsistent feel to the text in these instances. The fact that ἀριστερός, though still a euphemism, is much more mundane, gives the use of εὐώνυμος a sense of the extraordinary in this text; the instances of ἀριστερός, then, make this unlikely the work of a copyist or compiler, and more the careless slip of a spontaneous pen.

This superstition is also present in the larger construction of the text. In the list of body parts, the right always comes before the left. The construction of Pr13 highlights this situation well: the preceding prognostication is for the left-hand testicle, and there is no prognostication for the right equivalent. Pr13 begins as a singular, before an awkward change of number, with ὅρχις / οἱ δύο, which I have translated into clumsy English as: ‘the testicle, the two of them’.²⁷ My suggestion is that the author originally intended this prognostication to be for the right testicle, having forgotten to write it before Pr12, and realised after starting that it would come after the left, and thus be unlucky. In this instance, the spontaneity is also evident from the line breaks. This prognostication begins on the same line as the previous prognostication, breaking the convention of a new line for a new statement. Missing prognostications could be a sign of this being the work of a copyist, but there are too many other inconsistencies for this. Instead they suggest that the text was only necessary as a whole, for the sake of being a palmomantic text, and not for its individual prognostications.

discussed by Johnston 2008, 128-130; Wirth 2010, esp. 76-91; and with Greek physiognomy, as discussed by C. Chandezon *et al.* 2014.

²⁶ Costanza 2009, 39.

²⁷ Whilst ὅρχις could be ioticisation of ὅρχεις, which is demonstrated elsewhere in the text, the line break and the placement of the article suggest this clumsy change, along with the argument below.

b. *Multiple apodoses*

Seventeen of the forty-seven prognostications in *P.Ryl.* 28 have two apodoses, differentiated based on the person's social class or status, for example Pr24, which suggests specific meanings for women and slaves. This is not unusual, either in the palmomantic tradition or in wider popular divination.²⁸ What is unusual is that, where we find multiple apodoses in other palmomantic texts, for example *P.Flor.* 391, they are consistently offered for each prognostication. Further, *P.Flor.* 391, for example, offers a repetitive selection of apodoses, for a slave, a maiden, a widow and a soldier. In *P.Ryl.* 28, slaves are the group that is mentioned most consistently, appearing ten times throughout the document. By contrast Pr13 is the only prognostication, of this or any other palmomantic text, to offer a specific apodosis for 'money-lenders' (δανεισται).

It is for this reason that I chose, in my translation, to use 'he' as the generic masculine pronoun. Many of the prognostications that have grammatically distinct apodoses use the indefinite subject construction without a pronoun, which is impossible to replicate in English, and is often replaced with the unwieldy 'he or she' or the contested singular 'they'.²⁹ Given the separated clauses for women (and, similarly, slaves), it can be assumed that the writer of *P.Ryl.* 28 had men (and, similarly, free men) as his target audience in the unspecified clauses.³⁰

The separated apodoses can display interesting insights into the author's expectations (or preconceptions) of the classes' hopes and anxieties. For example, Pr11 provides a general apodosis of 'joy' (εὐφροσία), followed by a separate apodosis of 'profit' (κέρδος), for women. The sexual connotation of εὐφροσία is underlined, in part by the body part in question, but also by the separated apodosis

²⁸ Cf. Artem. 1.31.

²⁹ For a discussion of the indefinite grammatical subject and its effects, cf. Corbeill 2015, esp. 7.

³⁰ Cf. Chandezon *et al.* 2014, 307: 'In all versions [of palmomantic texts] the general statements concern the generic type, which implicitly is that of a man, adult and free'. Cf. also Winkler 1990, 39, who notes the androcentric focus of Artemidorus: although he does report the dreams of women (and, indeed, slaves), there is an 'orientation around male agency and concerns'.

for women in this case, as they are being excluded from sexual joy.³¹ In Greek and Roman culture, sexual desire, and sexual 'joy', were considered negative attributes, and even dangerous for women.³² Yet the idea of profit for women is also somewhat unexpected. In Greek and Roman society, women had limited legal and fiscal personalities, and the idea of work – especially paid work – was demeaning for a woman.³³ In Greco-Roman Egypt, however, despite Hellenisation and the subsequent coming of Rome, certain aspects of Egyptian law and custom seem to have held and, in this case, women were still entitled to inheritance and ownership. Evidence suggests that women held a range of jobs, from fishing to bathhouse management.³⁴ This, then, places *P.Ryl.* 28 firmly within a Romano-Egyptian context, perhaps more so than as a text copied from and circulated across a wider geographical area.³⁵ Similarly, the inclusion of slaves as questioners allows us to glimpse the lives behind this aspect of lived ancient religion.

c. *Doubled body parts*

In *P.Ryl.* 28, five prognostications offer apodoses based on the simultaneous twitching of both the left and the right body parts in Pr3 (the hips), Pr13 (the testicles), Pr25 (the lower legs), Pr30 (the hamstrings) and Pr37 (the heels). Further to being an inconsistency within *P.Ryl.* 28, this feature is not present in any other surviving palmomantic text, either the surviving papyri or the medieval manuscripts. Although other surviving papyrological editions in this tradition are much more fragmentary, and so it is hard to draw conclusions *ex silentio*, this

³¹ Of course, the more traditional translations of βάλλανος and ἐπιδερμῖς, 'head (of the penis)' and 'foreskin' are exclusively male body parts. I have rendered, in the translation, more technical terms that can refer to the male and female counterparts, on the basis of the second apodosis, but it remains unclear whether this equivalence would have been understood by the author. The author may, alternatively, have just not thought too carefully about which apodosis was attached to which protasis.

³² Cf. e.g. D'Ambra 2007, 12. Indeed, references to female sexual enjoyment across the ancient world are rare, and generally confined to either the equally dangerous magical spells (cf. e.g. PGM XV 1-21), or Christian reformation tales, for which see Montserrat 1996, esp. 109.

³³ D'Ambra 2007, 94.

³⁴ See Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 201-203 for a "meagre crop of female occupations". On 301-304, they claim at least 10% of households to be headed by women. Cf. also Rowlandson *et al.* 1998, 220, who suggests that, due to Egypt's unique inheritance laws, up to a third of landowners were women.

³⁵ Cf. Quack 2006, esp. 177.

uniqueness certainly creates some distance. A spontaneity in creation, as opposed to revisionist consideration or innovation within the tradition, is also suggested by the fact that, from a scientific point of view, although the medical origin of involuntary twitching is still debated, in most (benign) cases it is the result of the discharge of a single motor unit group in the muscle.³⁶ As such, the simultaneous twitching of both the left and the right body parts medically does not occur. The author of *P.Ryl.* 28 added these sporadically, not based on their inclusion in other texts, nor in the author's own experience of clients reporting this occurrence (thus a revision of previous knowledge), but simply as they thought about it, and as they spontaneously wrote this text.

Further, there is grammatical inconsistency in the way the doubled body parts are presented. To take Pr1 again as a 'regular' example again: in 'If the abdomen twitches, it shows something good with negative conversation' (ὑπογάστριον ἐὰν ἄλληται, ἀγαθὸν τι δηλοῖ μετ' ἄλλοῖου λόγου), the subject of the apodosis' verb, δηλοῖ, could either be the ὑπογάστριον, 'the abdomen', or the actual act of twitching itself. In doubled body parts, then, if the former construction applies we would find a verb in the plural – since the body parts are in the plural – and if the latter did we would have a verb in the singular – since the twitching as a sign is a singular construction. But out of the five examples, we find two plural verbs (Pr13 and Pr37), and two singular (Pr25 and Pr30). The fifth is a grammatically distinct construction using ὁ τοιοῦτος, where the verb is explicitly not dependent on the protasis.

d. *Terminal Invocations*

Divination, as mentioned above, is about communication with super-human agent(s), which, in the ancient Mediterranean context, were gods. It is therefore unsurprising to find that, occasionally, the prognostications are followed by an imperative to pray to a specific deity. Seven deities are invoked in sixteen of *P.Ryl.* 28's forty-seven prognostications: Tyche is the most prevalent, mentioned five times (Pr23, Pr30, Pr32, Pr40 and Pr41), whilst Aphrodite and Dionysus are each

³⁶ Cf. Roth 1982; Dotson and Kasarskis 2014.

mentioned only once (Pr23 and Pr42 respectively). In this respect, other palmomantic texts are equally haphazard, and *P.Flor.* 391, *P.Osl.* 76, *P.Mich* 776 and *P.Vindob.G.* 2859V each present occasional invocations. What is interesting, however, is that there is no correlation between the deities invoked. Out of the seven deities of *P.Ryl.* 28, Zeus is mentioned in *P.Flor.* 391 and *P.Mich* 776, but otherwise only Hermes and Nemesis appear in *P.Flor.* 391; no comparisons are otherwise present in the other texts. By contrast, Helios is the most common deity mentioned by the wider palmomantic tradition,³⁷ appearing four times in *P.Flor.* 391, once in *P.Osl.* 76 and once in *P.Vindob.G.* 2859V, yet he is curiously absent from *P.Ryl.* 28.

This may imply that the author simply entertained an individual notion of the divine concepts, but even within the text of *P.Ryl.* 28, there is little unity between the deities invoked and the prognostications that invoke them. For example, Pr28 foretells that the person so affected shall be vexed on account of a friend (λυπηθήσεται [...] διὰ φίλον), and invokes Nemesis as a response. Vexation is the apodosis for two other prognostications – Pr29 and Pr32 – the latter being specifically by a woman or friend (ἐνὶ γυναικὶ [...] ἢ φίλῳ), yet no mention is made of Nemesis for either of these. Instead, at Pr32 we find an invocation to Tyche following the apodosis. A similar disparity is found when analysing the relationship between the other terminal invocations and their apodoses.

Overall, it is hard to escape the impression that *P.Ryl.* 28 contains a lot of inconsistency, which, I would argue, is suggestive of a spontaneous creation, with little concern for what the text actually said. The author's only concern, it seems, was to have the appearance of a palmomantic reference guide that would stand up to the mild scrutiny of a divinatory reading, for which the client would presumably not get to see the text itself, but merely be told their future by the ritual expert. Either that, or the author's left-hand ankle-joint (Pr36) was twitching as they wrote.

4. Truth and spontaneity

³⁷ Helios is also one of the most common deities of the PGM and Roman-Egyptian magical tradition. Cf. e.g. Pachoumi 2015.

Why would someone go to the trouble of spontaneously creating a document in this way? Paper and papyrus, in the ancient world, were expensive, and many divinatory traditions were based on oral rather than written traditions.³⁸ But from a lived ancient religion perspective, owning and using a document such as this, regardless of its origin, would establish a transferred authority for the ritual expert selling advice based on divine twitching, but also dreams and any other unusual phenomena, in the marketplace. *P.Ryl.* 28's size and format, noted above, suggest an ease of transport but also of its use during a consultation.

Literacy was quite widely and generally used throughout the Roman Empire, and its relationship to power has previously been analysed through a number of different lenses.³⁹ Without claiming a single line of evolution from ancient orality to the mediaeval manuscript tradition, then, it is possible to see the ways that literary and written traditions, such as the invention of the codex, develop oral ritual traditions and create the benefit from (and need of) textual authority in the eyes of the client as much as the ritual expert. S. Johnston sees the itinerant ritual expert, in the Classical period at least, as someone who "made a profession out of something that, arguably, anyone could do to some extent".⁴⁰ Within oral traditions, particularly for more 'inspired' forms of divination, authority was created through mythological genealogies, for example the tradition of the Branchidae at Didyma.⁴¹ With a more 'technical' form of divination such as palmomancy, a constructed heritage for the text rather than the ritual expert has a similar effect, at least as far as the client is concerned. In this respect, the ritual expert is not trying to create authority in his own name, but trying to demonstrate that his knowledge comes from a greater tradition. The reference to Berossus in *P.Ryl.* 28's Pr8 (line 36) is a good example of this.⁴²

³⁸ For the discussion of the cost of paper, especially in regard to the codex form, see Johnson 2009. For the increasingly important written aspect of these oral traditions, see Klingshirn 2007 and below.

³⁹ Woolf 2009. Cf. also the papers collected in Bowman and Woolf 1994.

⁴⁰ 2008, 115

⁴¹ Cf. Stoneman 2011, 84.

⁴² Berossus' name is linked by some ancient authors to astrological learning, for example Plin. *HN* 7.37, as well as astronomical, for example Vitruvius 9.2. His own works do not survive directly, except for

My definition of ‘spontaneously created’, however, should not be mistaken as a synonym of ‘fake’. In the context of lived divinatory traditions, the dichotomy of ‘real’ and ‘fake’ is unhelpful, as things are not so clear cut. Performativity theory can be enlightening when applied to the study of divination. The term was first coined by J. Austin, in speech theory, to denote utterances that have the capacity to act or consummate an action, or even an identity.⁴³ More recently, this has been used extensively by J. Butler in Gender Studies, to denote how gender as an identity is not stable, but must be repeatedly performed, or acted, in order to be established.⁴⁴ Performativity, when put into a divination context, would be the expectation of the elements that constitute the tradition actually *establishing* the reality of the consultation, and being retroactively necessary for said consultation to be correct. The retroactive nature of performativity is particularly relevant in divinatory contexts. A prediction is verified when it comes true and, as such, retroactively confirms the reality of the ritual, the consultation and the prophecy.⁴⁵ The reality of any future consultation is then built upon this expectation. As a comparative example, the majority of Artemidorus’ interpretations in the *Oneirocritica*, are based upon previous dreamers having had such dreams and received such outcomes.⁴⁶ As such, the ‘truth’ of such a prediction is performatively constructed, being retroactively viable in that individual account.

In the case of *P.Ryl.* 28, and the technical divination of palmomancy, the person so affected seeking consultation for a twitch or any other phenomenon needs assurance that the ritual expert is, in fact, a ritual expert, who is able to provide a

a few fragments of his *Babylonian History*. He is not linked with palmomancy, or indeed other forms of divination beyond astrology, anywhere else, however his name could be invoked here as a byword for divinatory knowledge in order to create a mythical heritage of the text. Cf. Dasen 2015, 154, who discusses the use of Melampous as the (fictional) author of the *Περὶ Ἑλαιῶν τοῦ Σώματος*.

⁴³ Austin 1962.

⁴⁴ The key text is Butler 1990, 163-180.

⁴⁵ Cf. Potter 1994, 2: ‘In antiquity, as now, prophecy was only rarely concerned with the future. Most prophetic interpretation was concerned with isolating moments in the present that had been foreseen in the past, interpreting the symbolic meanings of prophecies, making venerated texts relevant in the present’. Cf. also Noegel 2007, esp. 40-41, and 2010, esp. 147-149, who discusses the use of performative theory in Ancient Near Eastern divinatory traditions as a method of controlling the otherwise unbridled power that sign interpretation represents.

⁴⁶ Book five, for example, is entirely composed of previous dreams and the outcomes for their dreamers.

‘truthful’ interpretation. The existence of *P.Ryl.* 28 is a visible demonstration of that knowledge and as such skill; the precise contents of *P.Ryl.* 28 are not going to be seen or checked by the client, and so the meaning of the words is much less important than their presence. A ‘reading’ may even have been made up on the spot by the ritual expert, based on the client’s particular predicament, without reference to the text itself.⁴⁷

In his discussion of the written traditions of lot diviners in Rome and Italy, W. Klingshirn gives three reasons for writing a handbook: an attempt to create a written discipline, a connection to the established shrines and famous prophets and, most importantly, “credible advice, that is, advice that looked and sounded credible”.⁴⁸ It is for this third reason especially that one might spontaneously create a divinatory text: the construction of credibility is not necessarily based on pre-existing truth, but on a truth that is performatively constructed by that creation.

5. Concluding Remarks

We unfortunately know nothing of any ritual that may have been part of the divinatory tradition based on bodily twitching. There may have been a complex combination of words and actions, to check if the sign was really divinatory, or there may have been no necessary action on the part of the person so affected. But the text of *P.Ryl.* 28 demonstrates that there was a tradition of performatively constructed ‘truths’ that made up this lived divinatory tradition. I have argued here that the document was created without regard for other texts in the tradition, or even regard for research based on previous consultations – which I have termed a ‘spontaneous creation’. But spontaneity does not make the text any less ‘true’; rather it allows us to glimpse the life of a ritual expert, constructing an authority they can use to boost their professional credibility, skipping over the details of the actual content. The text

⁴⁷ Cf. with Furley and Gysembergh 2015, 20, writing of Greek extispicy experts: ‘A more nuanced answer, after going through the case step by step with the inquirer, was much more likely to give satisfaction. Even without the liver to help, an expert may have been able to discover whether a prospective action by his client was a good idea or not!’

⁴⁸ Klingshirn 2007, 157-8.

of *P.Ryl.* 28 was still able to construct a pre-established authority, with or without regard to the wider palmomantic tradition.

Appendix: P.Ryl. 28 text

The following is my own transcription of the text of P. Ryl. 28, with reference in places to Hunt's original transcription. There are a number of places in which I have chosen to mark letters as uncertain or within a lacuna, in disagreement with Hunt. The choices of the previous edition may be in part due to its publication prior to the agreement of the Leiden Conventions, and perhaps to further deterioration of the text in the past one hundred years.

There are some parts, however, where Hunt has provided whole words that I do not feel can be seen in the current state of the manuscript, for example in line 203. In these cases I have followed Hunt's lead in restoring the text, but kept each within lacunae.

RECTO 1 (→)

ὑπογάστριον ἐὰν

ἄλληται, ἀγαθόν τι

δ[η]λοῖ⁴⁹ μετ'ἄλλο[ιο]υ λόγου.

ἰ[σχ]ίου τὸ δεξιὸν μέ-

5 ρος ἐὰν ἄλληται, λυπη-

θῇ(σεται)⁵⁰ τὸν παρόντα καιρόν\ν/,⁵¹

⁴⁹ This page is particularly badly preserved, with two lacunae running down the length of the page.

⁵⁰ As first expanded by Hunt.

⁵¹ The final ν is marked on the manuscript as a bar over the preceding letter. This practice is repeated throughout the manuscript, but not religiously enforced.

εἴτα εὐφρανθή(σεται)⁵² δι[ιὰ] αὐτὸ \ν/⁵³

ἢ φίλον.

ισχίου τὰ ἀμφοτέρωτα μέρη

10 ἐὰν ἄλλωνται, σ[τή]σεται

πολλὰ ὁ τοιοῦτος ἐν δι-

πλ[ο]ῖς κόποις ἐχόμενος ·

εὐχου Νείκη.⁵⁴

ὄσφρος δεξιὸν μέρος ἐὰν

15 ἄλληται, μεγάλως εὐπορή-

σει καὶ δοῦλος καὶ πένης

VERSO 1 (↓)

ἐκ κόπων.

ὄσφρος εὐώνυμον μέρος

ἐὰν ἄλληται, ἐν πολλοῖς [ἐ]μ-

20 βήσεται καὶ ζημίας [μέ]χρι

καιρ[ο]ῦ τινος καὶ ἐκ τῶ ν

κακῶν ἀνακύψει.

⁵² See n.2.

⁵³ See n.3.

⁵⁴ I. Νίκη.

- ὁσφύος τὸ μέσον ἐὰν ἄλλη-
ται, δοθῆναι τι αὐτῷ ὑπὸ
25 τῶν οἰκίων⁵⁵ λαμπρ[ὸ]ν
κέρδος, καὶ δούλῳ καὶ ἐλευ-
θερῳ.
ἦβη ἐὰν ἄλληται, εὐσχη-
μονήσει ὁ τοιοῦτος· ἀγάμ[ω]
30 δὲ γάμον δηλοῖ.
ὑπόταυρος ἐὰν ἄλληται,
δειγματισθῇσ[ε]ται ὁ τοι-
οῦτ[ο]ς ἀπολέσ[θαι]⁵⁶ τι κ[ρ]υ-

RECTO 2 (→)

- φιμαῖον· δούλῳ δὲ μ[ετά]-
35 στασιν τῆς δουλείας⁵⁷ ἢ τὸ-
πους⁵⁸ ὡς Βηρασσοῦς⁵⁹ λέγει· ε[ὔ]-
χου Διῖ.

⁵⁵ I. οἰκείων.

⁵⁶ Hunt asserts that the first two letters of ἀπολέσ[θαι] have been corrected, possibly by a second hand. Unfortunately the page is frayed at the bottom and, whilst the letters can still be read, it is impossible to confirm or deny that this is a correction.

⁵⁷ I. δουλείας.

⁵⁸ I. τόπου.

⁵⁹ Hunt corrects to Βερῶσσοις, however there are a number of Hellenised variants recognised.

ἱερὸν ὅστοῦν ἐὰν ἄλλη-

ται, ἐπὶκτησιν δηλοῖ

40 πολλῶν αγαθῶν γενέσθ\α/ι.

αἰδοῖον ἐὰν ἄλληται, πολ-

λὰ ἀποβάλλει ὁ τοιοῦτος,

ἔχων δὲ τέκνα γηροβο-

σκηθῇ(σεται),⁶⁰ ἐν δανίοις⁶¹ δὲ

45 ὑπαρχων αποδώσει.

βάλανος ἢ ἐπιδερμῖς

ἐὰν ἄλλη\ται/,⁶² εὐφρασίαν

δηλοῖ, γυναικὶ δὲ [[κε]] κέρ-

δος μετὰ ψόγου δηλοῖ.

VERSO 2 (↓)

50 ὄρχις εὐώνυμο[[v]]\ς/⁶³ ἐὰν ἄλ-

ληται, ἀγαθὸν τι σημαί-

νει ἀπὸ κόπων. ὄρχις⁶⁴

οἱ δύο ἐὰν ἄλλωνται,

⁶⁰ See n.2.

⁶¹ I. δανείους.

⁶² Hunt again argues for this being a correction by a second hand, however I am not convinced that there is enough palaeographic evidence here to uphold this view.

⁶³ The \ς/ is written above the [[v]], which has been crossed through once.

⁶⁴ This word is preceded by a 'forked paragraphus' symbol, usually used with "the effect of marking a section of verse or prose, a 'paragraph' in the modern sense" (Turner 1971, 15).

εὐφρασίας δηλοῦσιν

55 γενέσθαι ἐκ γυναικι-

[κ]οῦ πρόσωπου · χαλε- >⁶⁵

πὸν δὲ δανισταῖς.⁶⁶

πυγὴ δεξιὰ ἐὰν ἄλ-

ληται, τῷ μὲν ἐπιδι-

60 φρίω⁶⁷ ἔχοντι ἐργασί-

αν δὲ ἀπραγίαν δη-

λοῖ · ἐκδημήσαι⁶⁸ δὲ ἄλυ-

πον τὸ σημῖον.⁶⁹ πυγὴ⁷⁰

τὸ ἐυώνυμον μέρος

RECTO 3 (→)

65 ἐὰν ἄλληται, [ἐ]ῖς⁷¹ κενόν

τι πρᾶγμα ἀναλῶσαι

προδηλοῖ.

ἢ ἔδρα, δακτύλιος δὲ ὑ-

⁶⁵ This sign is repeated ten through the document, at ll. 79, 107, 118, 152, 158, 189, 199, 203 and 207. Its meaning is unknown.

⁶⁶ l. δανισταῖς.

⁶⁷ l. ἐπιδί | φριον.

⁶⁸ l. ἐκδημήσαντι.

⁶⁹ l. σημείον.

⁷⁰ This word is again preceded by a forked paragraphus sign, with the same reasoning and effect as on line 52. Also, l. πυγῆς.

⁷¹ The diacritic here marks the repetition of the ι.

πὸ τινων καλουμένη,⁷²

70 ἐὰν ἄλληται, διγματ[ι]-

σμοὺς⁷³ καὶ λοιδορίας

καὶ κρυφισμῶν πρα-

γμάτων ἐπιφάν\ι/αν⁷⁴

δηλοῖ.

75 κοτύλεις⁷⁵ δεξιὰ ἐὰν ἄλ-

ληται, ὁ καλούμενος

γλουτός, σκυλμοὺς

καὶ πόνους δηλοῖ ·

VERSO 3 (↓)

εἰς ἐκδημίαν πορευο- >

80 μένω ἀγαθόν.

κοτύλεις⁷⁶ εὐώνυμος⁷⁷

ἐὰν ἄλληται, σκυλ-

⁷² Hunt views a reading of either καλουμένη or καλουμέν[os] to be possible here. I would argue that, while both could be correct, the primacy of ἔδρα, along with the use of the definite article attached to it, makes it the subject of both clauses. cf. ll. 76-7.

⁷³ l. δειγματισμοὺς.

⁷⁴ l. ἐπιφάνειαν.

⁷⁵ l. κοτύλη.

⁷⁶ l. κοτύλαι. See previous note.

⁷⁷ Hunt's original publication does not have the final two letters, ος, however they are clearly on the manuscript itself.

- μους καὶ πόνους δη
λοῖ· κακοπαθήσαντα
85 δὲ εὐφρανθῆναι.
μηρὸς δεξιὸς ἐὰν ἄλ-
ληται, ἐπίκτησιν
ἐκ νεώτερου πρόσω-
που γεν[έ]σθα[ι] δη[λ]οι·
90 ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ γυναι-
κὶ καὶ δούλῳ.
μηρὸς εὐώνυμος -

RECTO 4 (→)

- ἐὰν ἄλληται, εὐφρα-
σίαν δηλοῖ καὶ κέρ-
95 δος ἐκ θη[λ]υκοῦ πρό-
σώπου.
γόνυ δεξιὸν ἐὰν ἄλλ\η/-
ται, εὐφρανθήσεται ὁ
τοιούτος ἐκ φιλικοῦ
100 πρόσωπου· εὗχου Τύ-
χη.

γόνυ εὐώ[ν]υμον ἐάν

ἄλ[λητ]αι, μεταστασί-

ας καὶ ἄηδ[ι]ας δηλοῖ

105 ἀπο θηλυκῶν.

κνήμη δεξιὰ ἐάν ἄλ-

VERSO 4 (↓)

ληται, σημαίνει⁷⁸ αὐ- >

τὸν γενέσθαι ἔνδο-

ξον · γυναικ[ι] δὲ ἐ-

110 παφροδ[ει]σίαν⁷⁹ δη-

λοῖ · εὐχου Ἀφροδείτη⁸⁰

καὶ θύε.

κνήμη εὐώνυμο[ς] ἐ-

ὰν ἄλληται, σημαίνει⁸¹

115 γυναικὶ ψόγον ἐκ >

μοιχείας · δουλοῖς⁸² δὲ

⁷⁸ I. σημαίνει.

⁷⁹ I. ἐ|παθροδισίαν. Although there is a lacuna here, it is certainly as wide as two letters. The misspelling in the text can also be upheld by comparison to other similar words misspelt in the same way throughout the text. Cf. e.g. l. 111, Ἀφροδείτη.

⁸⁰ I. Ἀφροδίτη.

⁸¹ I. σημαίνει.

⁸² Though not wrong, the text generally refers to the affected person in the singular, and so δούλῳ would be more fitting.

ἀπειλαὶ⁸³ καὶ μόχθοι.⁸⁴

κνήμαι ἀμφοτέρω >

ραι ἐὰν ἄλλωνται,

RECTO 5 (↓)

120 ἐκ γυναικὸς μεγάλ-
λας [δ]ηλοῖ πράξεις καὶ
ἀποδημίας.

ἀντικνήμιον δεξι-

ὸν ἐὰν ἄλληται, δηλοῖ

125 αὐτὸν εὐπορήσαι με-
[γ]άλως · εὖχου Ἑρμεῖ.

ἀντικνήμιον εὐ-

ωνόμον ἐὰν ἄλη-

ται,⁸⁵ δηλοῖ αὐτὸν ἀ-

130 ποβαλεῖν πρόσω-

πον ὑποτακτι-

κόν · δουλὸν δὲ ὄν-

VERSO 5 (→)

⁸³ l. ἀπειλὰς.

⁸⁴ l. μόχθους.

⁸⁵ l. ἄλληται. This mistake is frequent from this point on.

τα ἐν δουλίᾳ⁸⁶ κούφι-

ο[[ιν ἐ]]κ⁸⁷ τῆς δουλίας.⁸⁸

135 κερκεις⁸⁹ δεξιὰ ἐὰν ἄλ-

ληται, λυπηθήσε-

ται ὁ τοιοῦτος διὰ φί-

λον, γενήσεται δὲ ἐν

ἐπήρεια⁹⁰ εὔχου Νέμε-

140 σει.

κερκίς ἀριστερὰ ἐὰν ἄλ-

ληται, ὁδὸν μακρὰν

πορεύσεται ἀπροσδό-

κητον, ἐφ' ἧ καὶ λυπη-

145 θήσεται ὁ τοιοῦτος.

ἀγκύλαι ἀμφότοεραι ἐ-

RECTO 6 (↓)

ἀν ἄλλωνται, ἀγαθὸν

⁸⁶ I. δουλεία.

⁸⁷ The deletion here is created by a large blot of ink. Given the neat deletion at l. 50, whereby the scribe has simply crossed through with a single line and written the correction superscript, it is probable that this was a mistake or a later, presumably accidental, deletion. The restored letters are written in by Hunt, which he then further corrects to read κούφι|σειν. The spacing of the deletion and other misspellings of the same nature in the text (cf. e.g. l. 133, δουλίᾳ) both confirm Hunt's restoration and correction.

⁸⁸ I. δουλείας.

⁸⁹ I. κερκίς.

⁹⁰ I. ἐπήρεια.

δηλοῖ· εὐχου Τύ[χη].

γαστροκνήμια δεξιὰ

150 ἐὰν ἄλληται, ἐξ ἀπροσ-

δόκητου προσ[λ]ημψε-

ταί τι κατὰ τὸν βίον >

καὶ ἔξει τοῦ καῖρου εὐ-

στάθειαν ⁹¹ δοῦλοι δὲ καὶ

155 πένης εὐπορήσει.

γαστροκνήμ[ια] εὐώνυ-

μα⁹² ἐὰν ἄλληται,⁹³ ἐπὶ γυ-

ναικὶ λυπη[θ]ή(σεται)⁹⁴ ἢ φί- >

λω· εὐχου Τύχη.

160 σφυρ[ὸ]ν δεξιὸν ἐὰν ἄλ-

ληται, [ἀγγ]ελίαν αὐτῷ

VERSO 6 (→)

σημαίνει⁹⁵ ἀπροσδόκη-

τον.

⁹¹ l. εὐ | στάθειαν.

⁹² l. εὐώνυ | μος.

⁹³ l. ἄλληται.

⁹⁴ See n.2.

⁹⁵ l. σημαίνει.

σφυρὸν εὐώνυμον ἐ-

165 ἂν ἄλληται, ἐν κρίσει

βαρη[θε]ῖς ἔσται⁹⁶ καὶ ἐκ-

φεύξεται.

ἀστραγάλος δεξιὸν

ποδὸς ἐὰν ἄληται,⁹⁷ λύ-

170 πην δηλοῖ γενέσθαι ·

ἐκδημήτη⁹⁸ δὲ κα[κο]-

πάθειαν⁹⁹ οἷσι¹⁰⁰ [εὖ]χ[ου] Νεῖ-

κη.¹⁰¹

ἀσ[τ]αγάλ[ος ε]ὐ[ών]υ-

175 μος π[ο]δὸς [ἐ]ὰν ἄλη-

RECTO 7 (↓)

ται,¹⁰² ἀνωμαλίαν δη-

λοῖ · εὖχου Νέμεσει.

⁹⁶ Hunt proposes that this “is not a satisfactory reading”, instead suggesting the correction of βαρηθήσεται.

⁹⁷ I. ἄλληται.

⁹⁸ I. ἐκδημήσαντι.

⁹⁹ I. κακο | πάθειαν.

¹⁰⁰ I. οἷσει.

¹⁰¹ I. Νι | κη.

¹⁰² I. ἄλληται.

πτέρναι ἀλλόμεναι

ἀγαθὸν δηλοῦσιν.

180 πούς δεξιὸς ἐὰν ἄλλη-

ται, δεσπότης ἔσται

πολλῶν ἀγαθῶν καὶ

κτημάτων· δουλὸς

δὲ ἐλεύθερος ἔσται.

185 π[ου]ς ἀριστε[ρ]ὸς ἐὰν ἄλ-

λη[τ]αι, σημαίνει¹⁰³ αὐ-

τὸν ἐπὶ λόγ[ω] καὶ πί-

στι¹⁰⁴ πλανηθῆν[αι], καὶ

ὁδὸν πορευόμενῳ >

VERSO 7 (→)

190 ἐνποδιοθῆναι¹⁰⁵ εὖ-

χου Ἑρμεῖ.

δάκτυλος μικρὸς¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ I. σημαίνει.

¹⁰⁴ I. πί | στει.

¹⁰⁵ I. ἐμποδιοθῆναι.

¹⁰⁶ I. μικρὸς.

δεξιὸν ποδ[ὸς] ἐὰν ἄλ-

λητα[ι], ἐὺπ[ορ]ίαν αὖ-

195 τῷ [δ]ηλοῖ ἐκ νεώτε-

ρου πρ[ό]σωπου · εὖχου

Τύχ[η].

ὁ δὲ [μετ]ὰ τὸν με[ι]κρο\ v/¹⁰⁷

ἐὰν [ἄλλ]ηται, τὸ αὖ- >

200 τὸ δηλοῖ · εὖχου [Τ]ύχῃ.

ἐὰ[v] ὁ τρίτος ἄλῃται,¹⁰⁸

ἀ[ηδ]ία[v] σημαίνει¹⁰⁹ καὶ

μα[χ]ας [ἔξ]ει [διὰ θ]ηλυ-

RECTO 8 (↓)

κὸν προσώπον, ἔπει-

205 τα εὐφρανθῆναι ·

εὖχου Διόνυσῳ.

ἐὰν δὲ μέγα ἄλῃ- >

ται,¹¹⁰ σημίνει¹¹¹ αὐτὸν

¹⁰⁷ I. μικρὸν, with the final v recorded as a bar over the preceding letter.

¹⁰⁸ I. ἄλλῃται.

¹⁰⁹ I. σημαίνει.

- δούλον ὄντα δεοπο-
210 τεύσαι καὶ πάσης
λύπης ἀπαλλάγη-
ναι.
δάκτυ[λ]ος [μει]κρὸς¹¹²
εὐωνόμου ποδὸς
215 ἐὰν ἄλληται,¹¹³ φροντί-
δα οὐ περὶ [ῖ]δ[ιω]ν

VERSO 8 (→)

- ἔχειν δηλοῖ ἔπειτα
χαρ[ας ε]ὔχου Διί.
ἐὰν δ[έ] ἐχόμενος¹¹⁴ με-
220 ρίμναις πολλοῖς πε-
[ριπε]σεῖται καὶ κακο-
παθείαις ·¹¹⁵ εὔχου Διί.
ἐὰν δὲ τέτ[αρτο]ς, πολ-
λῶν χρη[μάτων κύ]

¹¹⁰ I. ἄλληται.

¹¹¹ I. σημαίνει.

¹¹² I. μικρὸν, for restoration, cf. n. 32.

¹¹³ I. ἄλληται.

¹¹⁴ I. ἐπόμενος, also, sc. ἄλληται.

¹¹⁵ I. κακο | παθείαις.

225 ριος ἔσται καὶ [σωμά]τ[ω\ν/]·

[δο]ύλος δὲ α[ὐτὸν κλη]

[ρονο]μήσε[ι].

[ἐ]ὰν δὲ ὁ πέμπ[τ]ος ὁμοί

[ως] διὰ πρόσωπον [θη-]

230 [λ]υκ[ὸ]ν [ε]ὐπ[ο]ρήσει.

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